

Chapter 5 LCGMA Activity Plan Level Objectives

Activity plan level objectives appropriate to LCGMA and identified in this section are consistent with Resource Management Plan Objectives in the SEORMP/Record of Decision (pages 28 to 111) for Rangeland Vegetation, Special Status Plant Species, Water Resources and Riparian/Wetlands, Fish and Aquatic Habitat, Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat, Special Status Animal Species, Rangeland/Grazing Use Management, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Cultural Resources, and Human Uses and Values.

RANGELAND VEGETATION

RANGE VEG OBJ1: Maintain ecological function and health of vegetation communities. This would be evidenced by overall trend (photo-plot, line intercept, and professional judgment determinations) in either a not apparent or upward designation.

RANGE VEG OBJ2: Manage livestock grazing use in native range so that utilization levels are predominantly light (21 – 40%) and consistent with other resource values.

RANGE VEG OBJ3: Manage livestock grazing use in non-native seedings so that utilization levels do not exceed 60%.

SPECIAL STATUS PLANT SPECIES

SS PLANT OBJ1: Maintain or increase population numbers of two List 1 special status plant species found at Bull Flat Playa (profuse-flowered mesa mint) and Pigeontoe Playa (Davis' peppergrass).

SS PLANT OBJ2: Maintain population numbers of all other special status plant species.

SS PLANT OBJ3: Continue inventory and assessments for List 3 species so that their status can be more adequately addressed within the area.

RIPARIAN AND AQUATIC HABITATS

See Table 8, Riparian Trend Analysis, for methods that would be used to measure riparian objectives.

RIP OBJ 1: Maintain ecological function and health of vegetation communities. Increase streambank stability through increase of riparian species that provide a root matrix for holding soil particles together. Make progress toward >80 percent stable banks (same as INFISH Riparian Management Objective 1), and attain an upward trend in the following indicators:

- stream meanders are increasing
- incised channels are healing with vegetation cover

RIP OBJ 2: Decrease stream channel width/depth ratio (same as INFISH Riparian Management Objective 2), such that water depth is increasing and stream channel width is narrowing

RIP OBJ 3: Increase streambank shade through the improvement of riparian/wetland areas that support desired shade-providing riparian herbaceous and woody species. Using increases in height and volume of streambank-shading canopy as a surrogate indicator of lower stream temperatures, stream temperatures in perennial reaches will have no measurable increase (same as INFISH Riparian Management Objective 3).

RIP OBJ 4: Increase abundance and diversity of desirable woody and herbaceous riparian vegetation by attaining upward trends in the following indicators (same as INFISH Riparian Management Objective 4):

- at sites with ecological potential for woody vegetation, increase the overall number, species diversity, and canopy volume (height and width) of key woody plants
- at sites with ecological potential for woody vegetation, acquire healthy uneven-aged stands of key woody plants
- increase the overall surface area of herbaceous ground cover
- shift herbaceous species composition toward more late-succession species, such as Nebraska sedge, replacing more xeric-adapted species such as Douglas sedge and Baltic rush

WILDLIFE/WILDLIFE HABITAT AND SPECIAL STATUS ANIMAL SPECIES

TERRESTRIAL WLDF OBJ1

Terrestrial species of management importance in LCGMA are identified as the following: *Brewer's sparrow, horned lark, western meadowlark, black-throated sparrow, sage sparrow, loggerhead shrike, greater sage-grouse, sage thrasher, northern bald eagle, California bighorn sheep, pygmy rabbit, pronghorn, northern sagebrush lizard, and short-horned lizard.*

Maintain a high level of sagebrush shrub cover connectivity among the pastures and grazing allotments of LCGMA over the next 20 years as described below. Provide herbaceous plant cover in sagebrush upland communities that will supply the necessary forage, cover, and structure needed to sustain terrestrial wildlife communities.

Adaptive management involving BLM land treatments and wildfire suppression will incorporate wildlife habitat needs at multiple-scales (fine and site scale) in order to limit sagebrush community fragmentation.

- Maintain 85% or more of LCGMA Wyoming, mountain, and basin big sagebrush communities as shrub cover Class 3, 4, and 5 habitats as indicated in Table 9. This objective includes both native and modified rangelands. The structural class objective is met in all three sagebrush habitat types where sagebrush canopy cover ranges from approximately 10% to 35% (measured by line intercept) and shrub plants are in a

predominantly middle to late structural condition.

- BLM initiated land treatments resulting in grassland conditions will not exceed 5% of LCGMA, or about 26,000 acres, at any given time. This includes future actions such as fire fuel treatments, enhancement of existing seedings for livestock forage production, watershed treatments, and wildlife habitat improvement manipulations.
- Where necessary, allow land treatments in native rangeland as long as the combined amount of disturbance resulting in grassland conditions does not exceed 30% to 40% of any LCGMA pasture unit.
- Minimize the geographic extent of grassland habitats that occur in large blocks (320 acres or more).
- In seeded areas, maintain 40% or more shrubland cover conditions favorable for sagebrush dependent terrestrial wildlife. The structural class objective in shrublands is met where sagebrush canopy cover ranges from 10% to 35% and is in a predominantly middle to late structural condition.
- Appropriate fire management response planning for LCGMA will promote and complement the attainment of LCGMA sagebrush habitat management objectives. To the extent that it is possible, manage wildfire so that disturbance to rangeland does not exceed 10% of LCGMA over the next 20 years. Appropriate management responses to wildfire should be planned on an annual basis.
- Maintain herbaceous plant cover consistent with mid, late, and Potential Natural Community ecological status in big sagebrush, low sagebrush, and salt desert habitats. Desirable herbaceous plant communities for wildlife are comprised of native perennial grasses and multiple species of native forbs consistent with site potential as determined by Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) site guides.
- Manage grazing use impacts on native rangeland so that utilization levels are predominantly slight (6-20%) or light (21-40%) at reasonable distances from livestock water sources and salting areas.

The quality, distribution, and amount of shrubland habitat described in this activity plan objective can be expected to support the life history requirements of LCGMA Terrestrial Wildlife Species of Management Importance and substantially conserve ICBEMP Terrestrial Source Habitat values. The combined environmental impacts of disturbance from BLM initiated land treatments and wildfire over the next 20 years are addressed in this objective. Based on assessment findings, the objective assumes that 10% or less of LCGMA may be affected by wildfire disturbance over the next 20 years.

TERRESTRIAL WLDF OBJ 2

Provide quality riparian habitat for terrestrial wildlife, consistent with site potential and capability.

- Manage grazing use over the long term so that woody riparian plant species show signs of successful reproduction as evidenced by the presence of multiple-age class willow and aspen.
- Manage grazing use so that quality herbaceous plant cover is available for terrestrial wildlife communities.

- Where wildlife habitat improvement is needed and undesirable conditions are caused by livestock grazing use, riparian wildlife habitat objectives will be met when substantial upward trend is indicated in monitoring studies. Evidence of management success in meeting wildlife habitat objectives is based on the presence of multiple upward trend indicators shown in Table 8, Riparian Trend Analysis.

Wildlife habitat management objectives for LCGMA will be addressed sufficiently in LCGMA by managing for a substantial upward trend in habitat conditions. Refer to Specific Desired Plant Community Objectives in SEORMP, Appendix F (pages 287-288).

TERRESTRIAL WLDF OBJ 3

Management of Temporary Non-renewable (TNR) livestock grazing use authorizations.

- Allow for periodic fall TNR grazing use authorizations in crested wheatgrass or other exotic perennial grass seedings. *Livestock utilization on fall green-up* is allowed and will protect wildlife values as long as it does not exceed 40% by key forage plant method estimates.
- In LCGMA native rangelands, protect herbaceous forage, cover, and structure values important to terrestrial wildlife by denying requests for TNR grazing.

TERRESTRIAL WLDF OBJ 4

- Facilitate the maintenance, restoration, and enhancement of bighorn sheep populations and habitats on public land. Pursue management in accordance with the most current State bighorn sheep management plan in a manner consistent with the principles of multiple use management.

RANGELAND/GRAZING USE MANAGEMENT

RANGE OBJ1: Provide for a sustained level of livestock grazing consistent with other resource objectives and public land use allocations.

HUMAN USES AND VALUES

HUMAN USES OBJ1: Work cooperatively with private, community, and local government groups to diversify local economies and expand new industries consistent with other resource objectives. Continue to provide for customary commodity uses when consistent with other resource objectives.